

Agencies and Organizations Assisting Farmers

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES

28 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333,
207-287-3871

“get real. get maine!”

A promotional branding campaign to increase public awareness of Maine food and farm products, **Division of Market and Production Development, 287-3491**

Farmland Protection Program, 287-7520

Ag Business Planning Assistance

- **Farms for the Future**, administered jointly with Coastal Enterprises Inc., provides farmers grants to develop and implement business plans. **Dept. 287-7520 and 287-7620, CEI 772-5356**
- **NxLevel Business Planning**, coordinated by NRCS Heart of Maine Resource Conservation and Development Council, **368-4433**
- **Food and Farms Resource Guide**—*Handbook for Maine Agricultural Businesses* provides farmers information on various agricultural subjects and programs, **287-3491**

Ag Business Loans and Grants

- Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund
- Potato Marketing Improvement Fund
- Agricultural Development Grant
- Agricultural Technical Assistance Grant Program
- Agricultural Water Source Development Cost Share Program

MAINE FARM BUREAU

A non-governmental, voluntary organization whose mission is to analyze economic and public problems surrounding agriculture in Maine. Augusta, **622-4111**

MAINE FARM CREDIT

Specializes in lending to Maine's agricultural, fishing and forest products industries. Aroostook Regional Office, Presque Isle **764-6431**; or Southern Regional Office, Auburn **784-0193**

MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

A membership-based, non-profit organization working in the public interest to protect Maine's precious farmland resources. Bucksport, **469-6465**

MAINE FARMLINK

A farm transfer program that connects farmers seeking farmland with retiring Maine farmers and farm owners who wish to see their agricultural lands remain active. Currently there are 35 prospective sellers and 67 prospective buyers statewide, with 16 prospects in Somerset County. Freedom, **382-3255**

MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION (MOFGA)

Developed from a loose affiliation of farmers and gardeners committed to growing healthy, chemical-free food, into an internationally recognized advocate for food production that enhances and protects the ecological as well as economic vitality of rural communities. Unity, **568-4142**

MAINE WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK

A collaborative effort of farmers, agriculture and related non-profit, for profit and governmental agencies seeking to help women and other underserved individuals find the skills necessary to begin or continue farming profitably. Lisbon Falls, **800-287-1458**

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Assists farmers, landowners and communities with conserving and protecting natural resources. Each District works in partnership with the **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Farm**

Service Agency and other federal, state and local agencies, including the **NRCS-Resource Conservation and Development Council**. Skowhegan, **474-8324**

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

A major educational outreach program of the University of Maine, with offices statewide. Skowhegan **800-287-1495** or statewide **800-287-0274**

Web Links

United States Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
www.nrcs.usda.gov

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
www.maine.gov/argiculture/

“get real. get maine!”
www.getrealmaine.com

Maine State Web Portal
www.maine.gov

Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide
www.getrealmaine.com/connect/

References

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service
USDA Farm Service Agency
Maine Revenue Service

Somerset County



2003-2004 COUNTY PROFILE OF MAINE AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Maine's agricultural future is inextricably linked to its ability to continue to build strong, long-lasting connections between farmers and the communities they serve. To help all citizens better understand how agriculture is connected to every aspect of life in Maine, this county profile provides citizens, community planners and natural resource conservation groups important facts about farmers, farms, farmland and agricultural enterprises in Somerset County.

Farmers in Somerset County



	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Farming as Principal Occupation	296	306	302	221	244
Male Operators (N)	NA	486	487	373	386
Female Operators (N)	NA	24	36	40	45
Average Age	51	48	48	53	52

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Statewide, farming has a unique connection to the history of Maine. Farmers are stewards of the land; well-managed farmland protects natural resources and creates beautiful open space. Many of Maine's first settlers were farmers whose fields, farmhouses and barns shaped Maine's historic landscape. Today, Maine's agricultural producers and processors annually contribute over 1.2 billion dollars to Maine's economy and employ 65,000 Maine people!

Somerset County Farmland

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Number of Farms	477	510	523	413	431
Total Acres	123,774	125,236	122,973	106,971	101,270
Average Farm Size(A)	259	246	235	259	235
Total Cropland (A)	51,006	49,505	47,351	42,580	35,971
Total Pasture (A)	NA	22,857	20,563	14,023	10,430
Total Orchard (A)	211	241	232	167	152
Total Hay (A)	26,564	27,761	27,962	28,785	24,018
Total Woodland (A)	61,360	68,008	67,070	59,462	59,769

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Land in farms decreased 5 percent from 106,971 acres in 1992 to 101,270 acres in 1997.

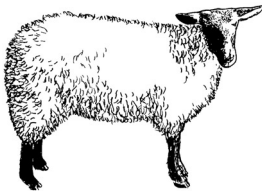


November
2003



Unique to Somerset County

- There are 17 granges in the county. **County Grange**, Carroll Dean, Master, 696-3874.
- County Chapter **Maine Farm Bureau**, President Frank Dickinson, Norridgewock, 634-3562
- *Guide to Farms, Farm stands and Farmers’ Markets in the Mountain Counties of Maine*, prepared by **Mountain Counties Heritage, Inc.**, 778-3885
- **Land Trust Organizations**
Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance, founded in 1988, 495-6039
Maine Wilderness Watershed Trust, founded in 1989, 685-3872
Great Moose Lake Regional Land Trust, founded in 1997, 474-9411
Somerset Woods Trustees, founded in 1927, 474-5151
- The **State Historic Preservation Office** (287-2132) and **Maine Preservation** (775-7737) have information regarding the county’s agriculturally related places of historic and cultural significance.



Prime Soils in Somerset County

PRIME FARMLAND

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines prime farmland as the land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce a sustained high yield of crops while using acceptable farming methods. Prime Farmland produces the highest yields and requires minimal amounts of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Prime Farmland is a limited strategic resource. No more of it is being created.

Southern Part of Somerset County
37,814 acres (estimated)

SOILS OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide significance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce a high yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable.

Southern Part of Somerset County
112,116 acres (estimated)

Farmland Protected in Somerset County

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED

- 144 acres (2 farms) have been protected by 2 nonprofit organizations

TEMPORARILY PROTECTED

USDA Farm Service Agency

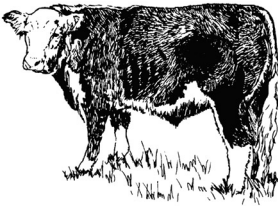
- 395 acres protected through Conservation Reserve Program (10-15 years)
- 274 acres protected through Debt for Nature (50 years)

Enrolled in Farm and Open Space Tax Program

- 54,922 acres farmland in 2002 — 6866 acres cropland plus 48,056 acres woodland
- 1,727 acres open space in 2001

Enrolled in Tree Growth Tax Program

- 379,647 acres in 2001



Annual Statewide Events and Programs in 2003

- 9 Somerset County farms opened their sugarhouses for Maine Maple Sunday, held on the 4th Sunday in March.
- 3 Somerset County farms welcomed the public on Open Farm Day, always held on the 4th Sunday in July.
- 4 Somerset County restaurants participated in Maine Menus Month in October, making special efforts to feature Maine grown, raised or harvested ingredients in their menus. Many farmers participated in Great Maine Apple Day at Highmoor Farm in early November to celebrate Maine’s apple harvest.
- 12 Somerset County farmers and 313 seniors participated in Maine Senior FarmShare, a program funded by the USDA, that provides locally grown produce to low-income seniors. Statewide, 185 Maine farmers benefited from nearly \$900,000 in sales, and additional seniors received fresh produce through food pantries and community meal sites.



Food, Farms* and Fairs in Somerset County

- 40 Farmstands/Greenhouses/Nurseries open to the public
- 5 Farmers’ Markets serving multiple communities
- 4 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms contract directly with their customers who pay a fixed price in advance for fresh produce throughout the season
- 10 Farms offer “Pick-Your-Own” fruits and vegetables
- 18 Farms host on-farm special events and activities, such as pumpkin hunts, animal viewing, hayrides and school programs
- 5 Agricultural Fairs drew a total of 63,617 people in 2003, these were the Athens Fair, Harmony Fair, New Portland Lions Fair, North New Portland Fair, and the Skowhegan Fair

** Some farms may be counted in multiple categories. Not all farm activities and retail services are listed here.*

Somerset County Agricultural Sales

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
All crops	\$1,551,000	\$1,543,000	\$1,455,00	\$2,335,000	\$4,903,000
Livestock/poultry and their products	\$20,951,000	\$26,892,000	\$21,483,000	\$17,246,000	\$19,824,000
Nursery and greenhouse products	\$277,000	\$355,000	\$224,000	\$445,000	\$907,000
Fruits, nuts and berries	NA	\$174,000	\$313,000	\$472,000	\$390,000

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

In Somerset County the average per farm market value of agricultural products sold increased 21 percent from \$47,412 in 1992 to \$57,371 in 1997. Statewide market research in 2002 showed 89 percent surveyed believe that buying locally grown food strengthens Maine’s economy.